

Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria Australia

Connect

Number 91:

February 1995



On the way to the National Student Participation Workshop?

Melbourne, July 9th - 10th 1995

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- The Voices of Youth Project: at the World Summit
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Connect

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Cover

These students were actually on the way to the Australian Network of Secondary Students (ANSS) Conference in 1988. Here they extend an invitation to you to attend the National Student Participation Workshop in Melbourne in July, 1995. See the 'lift-out' on pages 11 to 14 of this issue.

This Issue

I recently spent two energetic and exciting weekends with groups which have a strong commitment to student participation.

The first was an Alternative Education Conference, with home educators and others from Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and NSW, held in Warrnambool. The Conference explored issues of resourcing and support, and heard from a variety of 'alternative education' people, including a teacher and students from Warrnambool Community School - quietly existing now for 20 years. A future issue of *Connect* will hopefully grow from the Conference in collaboration with the Alternative Education Resource Organisation's journal, *Other Ways*.

Then I was in Sydney to witness the birth of the Professional Association of SRC Teacher/Advisers (PASTA) (see article, page 22). Here was a group of teachers and consultants, from all regions of the NSW Education system - SRC support teachers in their schools or between schools in their regions - who have now made a commitment to continue to support students and each other, and to share experiences and resources, through their own organisation. They have adopted the significant 'slogan': "Promoting student participation, leadership and representation" and see their work in a broader context than 'just' school governance.

The significant developments in NSW schools were reinforced by 1995's first meeting, held just after that weekend, of the State SRC Conference Working Party. This group is planning a large statewide student conference for August of this year, under the banner: "Go MAD - Make A Difference". More information will emerge in later issues of *Connect*.

When I was asked to reflect on the state of formalised student participation - networks of SRCs, for example - in other states of Australia, I could only be considerably gloomier. The throb of national activity that characterised the mid 80s, has all but vanished. Thus it is doubly (triply!) pleasing to see such positive and enthusiastic networking and support in NSW.

Connect will continue to have an active role in documenting and sharing this activity, so that all schools, throughout Australia, can benefit from the developments.

The National Student Participation Workshop, to be held in Melbourne this July, will be an important component of the re-growth. Please make plans **NOW** to attend!

Next Issue

Deadline for *Connect* #92: end of March, 1995. Your contributions are welcomed!

Roger Holdsworth

CREDIT FOR PARTICIPATION: REVISITED

ANOTHER STEP ... TOWARDS ACCREDITATION

In Connect 29, several articles under the heading 'Toward Accreditation' began exploring issues associated with ways of recognising the work students do on committees (etc) as part of their 'normal' school work. The following notes arise from a working party set up by the Student Advisory Group of the Victorian Participation and Equity Program (PEP) and also including some members of the Student Participation Support Network (also within PEP). They are some ideas towards developing more detailed case studies.

What is 'Accreditation'?

Accreditation here means a way of formally recognising participation on committees both inside and outside schools, as part of students' workload. It appears most obviously in ways of giving credit for such work within the school's reporting system.

Why is Accreditation Necessary?

Students are at school to learn. Accreditation raises two issues:

- participation in various structures is a valid learning experience and should be recognised within the overall teaching/learning strategy of the school;
- students should not be penalised for missing classes or homework times to attend meetings - this should not be an extra, unrecognised burden.

Behind this, accreditation is also important to enable **all** students to have access to participation and representation, not just those students who can 'afford the time'.

An issue that emerged about ten years ago, and is still relevant today, is that of extending academic credit to students for their participation in school activities - principally around school and regional governance. This issue was initially referred to as 'Accreditation', but (as this term has taken on other, more specific, meanings) has come to be called simply 'Credit'.

In **Connect 31**, February 1985, this article attempted to summarise some approaches which are still relevant today:

What are the Issues?

An approach to accreditation of students' participation on committees (etc) must pay attention to the following sorts of issues:

- If the student misses classes to serve on a committee, must class content be 'caught up'? Are there alternatives?
- What structural changes can happen to school organisation to make such attendance less personally disruptive?
- Should student representatives be required to present a formal report than can 'count' against course requirements?
- Who can/should attest to 'performance' on committees? In what terms?
- Can goals of involvement be specified that enable assessment to be negotiated?
- If some form of accreditation is negotiated, is it best as a new/separate unit, or incorporated into other subjects (eg English)? How about other subjects?
- What are the implications of such accreditation for the way one (teacher or student) approaches **all** other classes? eg class committees? negotiation?

(from Connect 29, October 1984)

Problems

The following danger areas need to be kept in mind:

- Participation on committees can be ignored or marginalised;
- Vague promises of recognition can be given, that are later denied;
- Students can be pressured to catch up on work missed or 'failed' because of 'missed classes';
- Teachers and students can lack an understanding of the importance of accreditation, why it must happen, how it can happen;
- Students can spring the requirement for accreditation on teachers at the end of the year. Teachers need notice in order to work out arrangements - this must be done at the start of the year.

What is Needed?

1. Students need time to:
 - prepare: read papers, consult with other students, lobby other committee members, travel (if necessary), write proposals, research issues;
 - attend: meetings can be during school hours (clashing with classes) at recesses, out of school hours;
 - follow-up: write reports, discuss with fellow members, report back to constituents.

This time needs to be available **without penalty** ie students should not be penalised for being on committees or carrying out recognised work in relation to attendance.
2. A form of reporting is needed that enables participation to be recognised.

It is difficult to conceive of a student receiving a letter or numerical grade for participation. Rather, a descriptive reporting system is needed to summarise the achievements in terms of specified and negotiated goals. Such a reporting system should give parity to a report on participation with all other subject reports. As such, this poses a challenge to the whole school's system of assessment and reporting.
3. The accreditation of participation should be, as far as practicable, part of the regular recognition the school gives to students' achievements.

Accreditation of participation should not be an 'add-on' element either structurally or in terms of the reporting format. It should be involved in and affect mainstream operation of the school.
4. At least a reference should be made available by the committee (etc) outlining attendance and involvement, skills and abilities exhibited, and growth shown.

This should be the minimum form of accreditation.

Where Accreditation Can Be Placed

1. A separate subject can be created eg as an elective. This could be a cross-age subject, say called 'Government'.

The subject would enrol all students involved on committees (SRC, School Council, Regional or State Committees etc) and could both give time for preparation and involvement as well as providing some training and background.

It would be relatively difficult to timetable in order to allow all interested and involved students to be in the class; it could reinforce a marginalisation of such involvement.
2. A subject can be created but not time-tabled. Teacher time would be allocated and enrolled students would communicate with this teacher in small groups or one-to-one.

This recognises the involvement formally in both student and teacher time and is flexible in arrangement. It is, however, easily absorbed - the time just vanishes to other things.
3. An existing subject can undertake participation as a 'project' eg a Politics class could set up an SRC as part of its 'normal' workload.

This could give both time and a natural focus for recognition. It could, however, seriously restrict who can become involved. Perhaps 'time in lieu' could be given for the project to run during recesses or after school.
4. A general subject eg 'Extension Studies' can be created for a range of activities of which participation on committees is one possibility.

Similar comments to 2. (above) can be made.

5. An existing subject can recognise participation as part of the workload of that subject.

For example, an English class could accept work done for meetings (minutes, reports etc) as equivalent to essays, exercises etc. This would mean that an agreement could be made about certain class lessons for which attendance was compulsory and others during which a student could be involved in meeting preparation, attendance or follow-up.

This seems to have the greatest flexibility and easiest recognition as part of the school's 'valid' curriculum. It does require extensive understanding of the issues by the whole school and explicit negotiation of processes.

What Should a Student Have to Do?

Attendance at a meeting is not enough (as attendance in a class is not enough). There should be explicit agreement on what needs to be produced and on what evidence credit is available.

Some possibilities are:

1. A student's verbal contribution to a meeting could be recorded in the minutes (in as much detail as required). These minutes could be accumulated by the student as 'evidence'.
2. A student could produce written reports, both to the meeting and as a report to constituents. These reports could be filed by the student.
3. Reports could be published eg in a school newspaper, community newspaper, in the school newsletter to parents, in a taped speech or interview over the PA system or on local radio etc. Copies of these reports could be filed by the student.
4. Speeches made to the meeting or to students (including at inter-school functions) could be files, either in written form or on tape.
5. Long-term or overview reports could be produced by the student using previous

documents (minutes, reports etc) as evidence.

6. The student could (should!) keep a diary that includes:

- administrative details - date of meeting, purpose, conversations etc;
- content of meetings - motions moved, topics discussed, reactions of others etc;
- personal reactions - feelings, uncertainties, tactics proposed etc.

This diary would form a record in itself and also be a source for student self-assessment.

1. The teacher of the new or 'regular' subject could receive work done and enter it as part of the student's recorded achievements. This person would then also be responsible for writing reports as required.

2. A 'special' teacher could be allocated to task (with time release if possible) for formally recognising participation (negotiating goals and workloads, writing reports etc) where an informal arrangement is decided upon.

3. An 'outsider' (eg consultant, PWC, parent, Principal) could maintain an overview and negotiate both goals and assessment.

4. A committee member could undertake to provide such a role.

5. It is possible that a mixture of these approaches could be possible, with the committee members, consultants, parents and Principal (for example) feeding reports to a specific teacher charged with their collation.

What Steps Should Be Taken?

1. These points need to be established in principle. An outline needs to be proposed to the School Principal and School Council.
2. Arrangements of accreditation need to be worked out clearly and in detail and written down. These can be negotiated individually or with a group.
3. A contract embodying these points needs to be signed by teachers and students involved.
4. Possibly a special form can be produced to include student and teacher assessment of participation.

It is ... intended to develop more detailed examples of how these or similar points can be implemented in practice. If you have comments, ideas or examples (for publication or not) please send them urgently to Connect.

Roger Holdsworth

Who Will Oversee Accreditation?

Self-assessment could be part of the outcome of accreditation of participation. But the participation and the pieces of work required probably also need some other 'verification'.

Possibilities for who could do this depend on the 'location' of the accreditation:

RESOURCE ASSISTS LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Practical Ideas and Training in Student Leadership

Metropolitan West Region of the NSW Department of School Education has recently released their third book of practical training ideas in student leadership.

Leadership Book 3 presents a set of activities for use in both primary and high schools. These activities, though designed primarily for use by Student Representative Councils, can be used in a variety of situations including classrooms, camps, peer support, leadership days and in-servicing.

Activities include those designed to train students in assertiveness, conflict resolution, goal setting and negotiation, as well as many others. Activities are star rated to assist schools in programming strategies which are suitable for students beginning in leadership activities, to those which can be used for more experienced students or for teachers.

The book also contains a useful section which includes information on the concept of leadership in the classroom, classroom meetings, starting and maintaining an SRC, as well as sample constitutions from both primary and high schools.

Both students and teachers were involved in the production of the book, which has been widely trialed by schools in the Met-West Region. Students and teachers who have used the book have proclaimed it an invaluable resource.

Leadership Book 3 is available at a cost of \$15.00 from:

'Staying On',
Bessemer Street,
Blacktown NSW 2148.
Phone: (02) 831 3200;
Fax: (02) 622 9346.

LEADERSHIP COURSE

A 1 Unit Board Endorsed Course in the Preliminary or HSC Year

Rationale

Students face a very challenging future. They will be required to participate in a society which is diverse, multicultural, constantly in a state of flux, and which is increasingly more complex and stressful. They need to acquire the skills, the understanding of processes and a level of commitment which will enable them not only to cope with such a society, but also to shape its direction so that it meets their needs and aspirations. This course on social skills and leadership will help them to do this.

Overlap

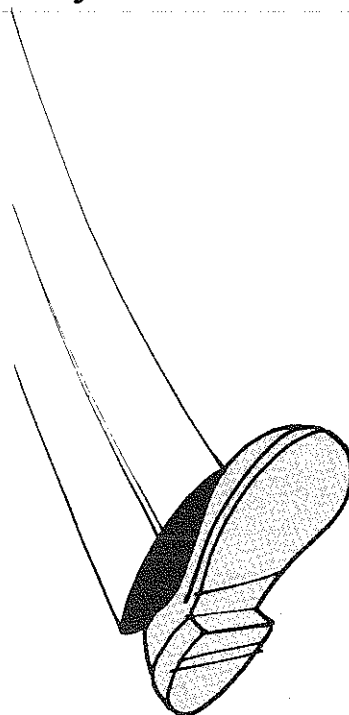
The Personal Development, Health, Physical Recreation Board Developed Course (BDC) has an emphasis on health matters and physical activity. This course emphasises communication, group dynamics, decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, planning and especially leadership, both in a theoretical and practical way. There is very little overlap between this course and the PDHPE BDC since 'personal identity' and 'relationships' form only a small part of one of the Core Modules in that syllabus.

Aim

This course is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to make a more worthwhile and positive contribution to their school life in the present and to the wider community in the future (that is, students will be able to take a pro-active role in their adult lives). Bathurst High School has adopted a senior school system which allows for a flexible timetable and places emphasis on self-directed learning. This course will enable students to adapt to this new way of organising the school.

Major Objectives

- to develop leadership skills;
- to improve the quality of student participation in leadership and decision making within the school community;
- to improve the welfare of all students through positive role-modelling;
- to improve the effectiveness of the student representative council;
- to enable student leaders to participate more confidently on the School Council;
- to recognise, refine and reflect on the increased level of responsibility required of seniors in the school's senior curriculum.



Assessment (general):

All students will be required to keep logbooks where they will record their work and reflect on it. The logbook will be kept for the whole year and monitored and assessed regularly. Students will be required to chart their own progress and to comment on the work of other students, thus bringing self- and peer-evaluation into the assessment process.

Specific assessment tasks for each content area:

Content Area	Value
1 Personal Profile Document	5%
2/3/4 Teacher Observation (ie assessment of practical work)	15%
5 Essay	10%
6 Test on problem-solving techniques	5%
7 Teacher observation	5%
8 Practical Projects (2)	40%
Logbook (for the whole year)	20%

The logbook will:

- recount what happened in timetabled lessons
- record what activities the student did outside lesson time
- reflect on progress ie
 - evaluate the success of what the student him/herself did
 - assess the contribution made by other students
 - assess the whole group/class

Note: the logbook will also be used to evaluate this course itself.

Bathurst High School: Leadership Course Approved for 1995

Course Content, Outcomes and Assessment

Course Content	Outcomes	Assessment
1. Developing a Personal Profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personal strengths and weaknesses; - self-esteem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # examine self in a constructive way; - self-confidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # evaluate areas of confidence and diffidence; # assertive (and aggressive) behaviour; - self-discipline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # importance of self motivation; # short and long term goals; # action planning. 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise their capabilities and limitations; - develop a sense of self-worth; - demonstrate increased self-confidence; - understand the influences on self-perception; - evaluate their personal beliefs and attitudes. 	Personal Profile Document
2. Developing Group Cohesion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Getting to know you' activities - energisers; - trust activities; - simulation exercises; 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understand group dynamics; - recognise the need to work in a positive and supportive atmosphere; - develop a sense of belonging with the people with whom they are to work; - identify the processes involved in maintaining positive; personal relationships. 	Teacher Observation <p><i>ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with others; • form working relationship with others; • gather and disseminate knowledge; <p><i>knowledge of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate language; • body language • verbal communication techniques.
3. Communication Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awareness of the different factors that contribute to communication; - explore the importance of speaking and listening; - using verbal and non-verbal means of exchanging messages (eg body language); - how individuals and groups respond to different messages; - role plays: good and bad models of communication (ie facilitating and preventing communication); - practical activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # techniques used by the media (print and electronic) # methods of making surveys # public speaking. 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speak and listen effectively; - use registers, both in speaking and writing, which are appropriate to the audience; - share ideas, feelings and information with others; - show a range of communication styles; - refine their ability to communicate with other individuals and groups; - model effective communication in a range of contexts; - make effective use of the media. 	

Course Content	Outcomes	Assessment
4. Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - examination of styles of decision making eg dictatorial, democratic, laissez-faire, consensus; - structured prioritising techniques; - formal meeting procedures; - simulation exercises focusing on a number of contexts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # initial planning for Content Area 8; # practical exercises relating to the functioning of the SRC (eg making meeting efficient, explaining the constitution, financing student projects); # evaluating, communicating and implementing the findings of surveys (see Content Area 3). 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise personal and external influences on decision making; - devise ways of gathering and interpreting information to facilitate informed decision making; - accept responsibility for individual and shared decisions; - effectively use appropriate methods of decision making. 	Teacher Observation <p><i>ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use different decision-making techniques; • respond to simulation exercises; • use surveys and information gathering techniques; <p><i>knowledge of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different styles of decision making; • steps needed to make effective decisions; • strengths and weaknesses of surveys.
5. Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what is leadership? - explore the qualities of a good leader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # examine prominent leaders in school, local, national and international communities; - exercises on aspects of leadership that help leaders be successful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # not being afraid to stand out; # risk-taking and coping with mistakes; - student leadership and the Student Representative Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # meetings and procedures; # group dynamics; # the 'effective school'. 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise good and bad leadership; - take on the roles of follower and leader; - critically appraise different styles of leadership; - become effective leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of the SRC; # in the school; # in the community; - become aware of, access and communicate results of available district, state, national and international opportunities for student participation in leadership activities. 	Essay
6. Problem Solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study and analysis of problem solving techniques and models using case studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # needs analysis; # nominal group technique; # research; # negotiation; # generating solutions; # making the decision; # implementing the solution; # evaluation. 	<i>Students will be able to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise problems; - lead a group to the resolution of a problem; - discover the effectiveness of a solution; - act successfully on evaluation; - collaborate with others in a range of contexts. 	Test: multiple choice and short answer

Course Content	Outcomes	Assessment
<p>7. Conflict Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - role play situations where conflict occurs; - explore different levels of conflict resolution; - refine individual and group skills (in personal relations). 	<p><i>Students will be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify areas of possible conflict; - resolve conflict acceptable to the parties involved. 	<p>Teacher Observation</p> <p><i>ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resolve conflict in simulation exercises; • work productively with other students in the class and with others (ie demonstrate ability to predict areas of possible conflict and to take action to prevent them); <p><i>knowledge of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies to prevent conflict: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # by using appropriate language, involving others in decision making; # the benefits of consultation; # the importance of all people affected by a decision being involved in the process of arriving at that decision (ie 'ownership').
<p>8. Organisation and Planning (Two Practical Projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need for planning; - exercises on time management; - how to do an action plan; - implementing action plans in practical projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # apply decision-making, problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills; # projects initiated by the SRC (eg participate in whole-school and community decisions); # initiate and conduct leadership training for junior students at school level and, where feasible, with other schools; # column in local newspaper; # fundraising; # election of school captains and school captain/curriculum team members. 	<p><i>Students will be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognise the need for planning; - organise and carry out a practical project; - develop the confidence to plan activities; - work to a schedule; - demonstrate initiative; - use physical and human resources to achieve a task; - draw on the knowledge and skills from others areas of the course for the practical projects. 	<p>Two Practical Projects</p> <p><i>ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a project which suits their abilities and which is a priority for other students in the school; • draw up a realisable action plan; • implement and conclude the action plan; • cope with unexpected problems; <p><i>knowledge of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies to achieve a given project; • scheduling and time management; • appropriate evaluative procedures.

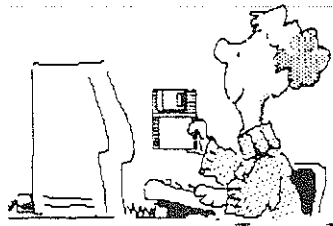
For more information on this course, contact:

Charles Kingston, Bathurst High School, Hope Street, Bathurst NSW 2795

HOW TO PRODUCE A NEWSLETTER

During the year, our grade (3/4B) has been able to produce a number of Newsletters for the Junior School Councils (JSC). These newsletters are for both our school information and to an outside network covering twelve other Junior School Councils.

As many of the students entering our room didn't have very good or any computer skills, we found the initial tasks were to quickly learn how to type, add pictures and especially set work out in an interesting way. Mr Bolton would only show us a skill once. Then, every time we had to do it, he would teach us something different, or a new way of doing the same task.



The Junior School Council Newsletter is done as part of our work to help us practise many of our skills eg editing, typing etc.

Mr Bolton and the teachers decided it would be nice to have a newsletter each term to show parents what we do at school during that term.

Listed below is a step-by-step explanation of how we go about creating a newsletter, mainly the JSC newsletter.

Why do we have a newsletter?

The JSC Newsletter helps communicate ideas across schools and gives all JSCs a chance to explain what they have done around their schools. The

Newsletters in our school show parents all the things we do at school during a term.

Skills we had to learn FAST.

We had to learn how to use the different programs, pictures, learn how to check spelling and practise doing all these things to help us get better.

Steps:

- 1) First we get all the information from the teachers, JSC members and from other schools or from the grades.
- 2) Then we start typing the information into the newsletter on the computers.
- 3) When we have finished typing the newsletter, we have to make sure that there are no mistakes in it and then add pictures.
- 4) Once we have checked and fixed the mistakes, we check our work to pick up anything we may have overlooked. It may mean moving stories around to suit the pictures or give a better feel or look to the page.
- 5) We read it again and see if it makes sense, then we put it in order. Now we check the layout to see if we are happy with the way it looks. This is where Mr Bolton comes up with suggestions and gives it his final approval (rarely checking the spelling - that's our job).
- 6) If there aren't any mistakes, we print a final copy.
- 7) When we have finished totally, we photocopy it and send them out to schools or in our newsletter.
- 8) The people who are responsible for the layouts are Renee, Rhiannon, Casey-lee, Kahlia, Dayle, Linh, Huong, Tara, Neil, Robert. We should say **everyone** in the grade helps in some way with each issue.



*Rhiannon and Renee 3/4B
Kingsbury Primary School,
Maryborough Avenue, Kingsbury 3083*

NATIONAL STUDENT PARTICIPATION WORKSHOP

**Sunday 9th July - Monday 10th July 1995
Melbourne, Victoria**

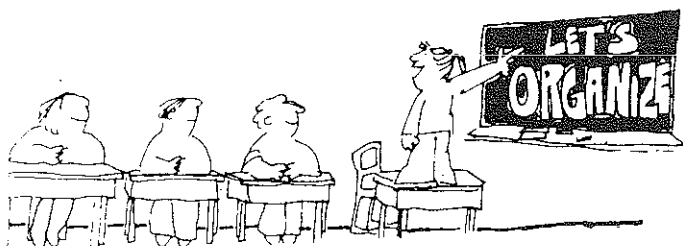
**Do you want to meet with others who are involved and active in student participation?
Do you want to share information about your SRC or curriculum project?**

Then come to Melbourne in July.

A National Student Participation Workshop is proposed for 9th - 10th July 1995 in Melbourne. This Workshop is planned to be held in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum Studies Curriculum '95 Conference at the University of Melbourne (11-14 July). This is during school holidays for all states and territories.

This first call asks for your expression of interest in the Student Participation Workshop. Please complete the attached form, copy and **return it to Connect by the end of March 1995** if you are interested to:

- attend the Workshop - let us know the numbers coming and your needs;
- present a session at the Workshop - let us know details of your topic.



Purpose of the Workshop

The National Student Participation Workshop aims to provide an opportunity for:

- students and others active in student participation approaches (in SRCs, governance, curriculum etc) to meet with others and share information, experiences and advice;
- students attending the ACSA Conference to prepare for the Conference and to gain background information about the curriculum issues being discussed.

Possible Sessions

'Student Participation' is a broad term that has many aspects. The Workshop can include many examples of the active participation of students in education decision making.

It is probable that sessions will be held on Student Representative Councils and Junior School Councils, curriculum participation and negotiation, and curriculum projects - students as researchers, media producers, tutors, mediators etc. The Workshop looks to students to provide leadership of the sessions - as presentations of information about projects in and between schools or as leaders of workshops.

Who is it for?

This is primarily a student Workshop. However, it will be equally important as an opportunity for student participation support people - teachers, consultants, parents - to attend and meet. Where appropriate, separate discussion sessions will be planned for support personnel.

Background

National Student Participation Workshops were held in Melbourne in 1980 and in Adelaide in 1981. Specific student governance sessions were also held in Katherine, NT and elsewhere in the mid-1980s.

Students attending previous ACSA Conferences have requested the opportunity to meet before the Conference to be briefed on and learn about the curriculum issues to be discussed there.

Connect is taking the initiative, in discussion with individuals and groups around Australia, to propose this National Workshop on Student Participation.

Practical Arrangements

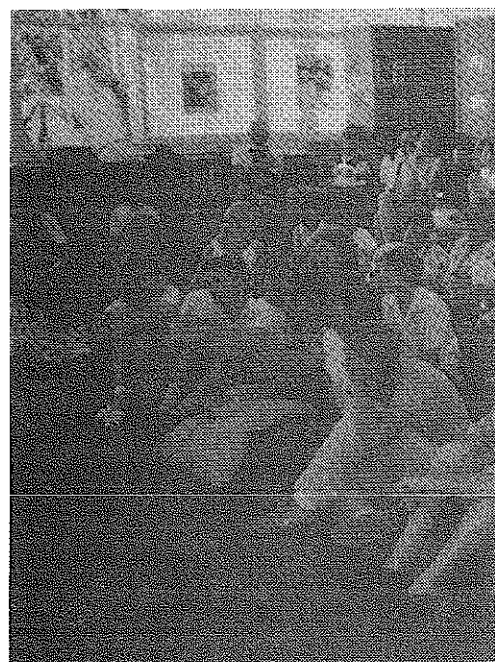
Dates: The Workshop is proposed to start around 3 pm on Sunday, 9th July 1995. The first evening would include a communal meal and an introductory welcoming and getting-to-know-you session. Sessions would be held throughout Monday, 10th July.

Location: The Workshop will be held at a central location, probably the University of Melbourne. Meeting venues and the organisation of a detailed program will be provided by **Connect** in association with the Youth Research Centre at the University.

Cost: Registration for and attendance at the Workshop will be **free**.

However, no funding is available for the Workshop, thus all participants will need to arrange their own travel, food and accommodation (it will be possible to extend the student and other accommodation arrangements listed by ACSA). If you need further information on this, contact us urgently.

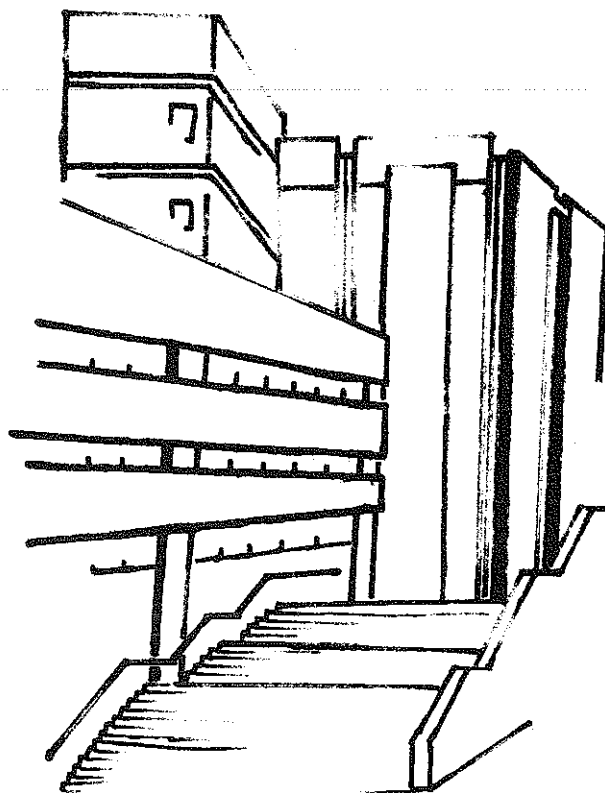
Accommodation bookings: use the ACSA Conference Registration Form - included in the last issue of **Connect** - to book Ormond College rooms for Sunday and Monday nights (\$45 per person per night). This arrangement is possible whether or not you are attending the ACSA Conference. (Contact us if you need a copy of this ACSA registration form.)



Students at
the ANSS/
Gabfest
Conference,
Katherine
(NT), 1985

What you need to do

- We need to know if you are interested to attend. The Workshop will go ahead if sufficient groups and individuals are interested to attend (we need a minimum of, say, 10 groups or 50 individual students). Please give us some indication of likely numbers attending.
- Also, let us know of any needs you have. For example, we can put you in touch with the Ormond College student accommodation at the University. However, **Connect** stresses that while we can assist and advise you, we do not have the resources to make such arrangements for you.
- We need to know what sessions you would want offered. What do you want from the Workshop? What are you interested to attend? What do you want to find out?
- We need to know what sessions you are interested to present. Can you tell others about what you're involved with? Can you teach a skill?



Register

In order to attend the Workshop, you must register in advance.

Return the attached form by the end of March.

We will then contact all those who register and provide further details about venue, program, arrangements etc.

Enquiries to **Connect**,
12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria

Phone: (03) 489 9052; (03) 344 8585;
Fax: (03) 344 8256

NATIONAL STUDENT PARTICIPATION WORKSHOP
Melbourne
Sunday July 9th - Monday July 10th 1995

REGISTRATION FORM

Name:

School/etc:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Telephone: Fax:

Numbers attending: students support persons

We are interested to attend sessions on:

.....

.....

We are interested to offer sessions on:

1

2

☐ We need advice and support on accommodation.

☐ Please send us the ACSA Conference Registration Form.

Copy, complete, return this form to:

Connect, 12 Brooke Street, Northcote 3070 Victoria

by Friday 31st March 1995

VOICES OF YOUTH PROJECT

This is an appeal from the United Nations to young people worldwide to participate in a unique on-line event via the Internet. Young people are invited to send their ideas to the world leaders who will be attending the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995. PLEASE HELP US BY FORWARDING THIS MESSAGE.

In March 1995, more than 90 world leaders will gather in Denmark for the World Summit for Social Development. The United Nations has designed an exhibition at this meeting, equipped with computers connected to the Internet, where presidents, prime-ministers, kings and queens can read and respond to the voices of young people around the world.

At the Summit, leaders will sign an action agreement on three very important issues: Poverty; Unemployment; and Social Conflict

The **Voices of Youth Project** will be viewed by thousands of participants at the Summit and, potentially, by millions of others on-line over the coming months.

You can make a difference by participating!

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

There are two ways that young people can participate in this unique event:

1. E-MAIL

By sending an e-mail message, you can contribute your ideas to the Summit. Think about some of the questions below and the three issues of the Social Summit. E-mail your ideas to unicefwssd@igc.apc.org and your message will be included on a World Wide Web (WWW) site on INTERNET and in the UN exhibit in Copenhagen.

2. WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

If you have access to the WWW you can visit a multimedia interactive environment established by the UN at

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/un/youth.html>

The World Wide Web is a project that many people around the world are using to exchange information in new and exciting ways over the Internet. To visit the site you should have a connection to the Internet and WWW browser software like Netscape, Mosaic, Lynx or Cello.

Through the WWW site, you can send your comments to the world leaders and also read what other young people are saying, as well as obtain more in-depth material on the Summit.

SPEAK YOUR MIND!

Be creative and speak from the heart. What kind of solution to social problems do you propose? Here are some questions that you might consider responding to:

- Why are there more poor people than ever before when for the first time in history everyone's basic needs could be met?
- Do you know what it is like to grow up homeless or without access to schooling, health care or safe drinking water?
- What happens if you have to drop out of school to help support your family?
- Why do differences in skin colour, language, religion or gender often lead people to mistreat each other?
- How can we better take care of the environment?
- How would you deal with all of these problems?

Individuals are welcome to send in their views, but messages can also be sent from classes, or youth groups as a whole. Please keep your message to about 250 words, plus the following information:

Your name:

Your age (under 25 please):

Your school:

Your e-mail address:

Your gender:

What country are you from:

Messages can be sent until 12 March 1995.

HOW TO READ WHAT YOU AND OTHERS HAVE TO SAY TO WORLD LEADERS

1. WWW

Visit the Linkages World Wide Web site, home of the UN **Voices of Youth** project:

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/un/youth.html>

2. GOPHER

Postings of young people will also be available at the following gopher site:

<gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org>

A SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

Thank you for exercising your right to participate and helping to build a better future. If you should have any questions about this project or ways that you can contribute, send your message to unicef@igc.apc.org.

Bob Zenhausern
drz@rdz.stjohns.edu
drz@sjvm.stjohns.edu
St. John's University, Jamaica, NY
+1-718-990-6447

PARTICIPATION: A NEW CULTURE

Young people's experience in a Spanish town

Paper prepared for Research Committee X of the International Sociological Association;
Bielefeld, 18-23 July 1994; XIII World Congress

Maria GOMEZ PATIÑO

Centro Europeo de Estudios Superiores (CEES) Madrid - España

This paper tries to show how a city, a town, a region, a nation or any territorial space can be governed through popular participation. The case that is here described will show that the young people of this particular town council are able to rule their own lives, as if it were a play.

It is not coincidence that it occurs at the town of DAIMIEL, this village of La Mancha. One should not forget that it is precisely this and no other scenery where the most important novel of the world's literature took place, a novel whose first lines are: "En un lugar de La Mancha, de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme..." (At a place of La Mancha, whose name I do not want to remember...)

It is not only a coincidence of scenery, but also of the facts that are described at chapter XLV of *Don Quixote of La Mancha*: *De cómo Sancho Panza tomó la posesión de su ínsula y del modo que comenzó a gobernar*. (How Sancho Panza took possession of his reign and the way he began to govern). In other words, the best world novel shows how somebody (Sancho Panza), who came from the ordinary people, was able to rule, perfectly, the region of Barataria.

It is in this same way that young people (up to 15 years) are capable, as in a play, of ruling and governing their own affairs. In both cases, there is direct contact with everyday life, therefore they become conscious of the everyday problems which have to be solved.

To this end, it is convenient to bring some notions and opinions from here and there that would completely justify not only the literary quote, but also the political, philosophical and sociological theory.

This article is divided into five parts:

1. Society
2. Participation
3. Description of the case
4. General conclusions
5. Daimiel's general and statistical data.

SOCIETY

The contents of this article would make no sense out of a sociological field, or rather, if there were no communication among the members of any society.

To constitute a society, its members should be inter-related to some extent. If people do not communicate among themselves, if they maintain physical and aggressive fights, if they do not cooperate, and they keep up this attitude for a period of time, their relationship is no more social and they do not form a society. (Campbell, 1988: 19).

Therefore, it seems logical that not only communication but cooperation too, will be necessary for the society.

Following this author's opinion: "A society cannot consist only of a territorial grouping or of a crowd". (Campbell, 1988: 19), to which he adds that: "what it is more important is to know if it is advisable to consider a society as an organisation created to satisfy individual or private objectives. If it is so, then we can theorise about the society trying to identify these objectives and to examine how the social organisation contribute to promote them." (Campbell, 1988: 21)

Economic theory, from the 18th century, has given some suggestions on how individuals try to obtain their own welfare "within the established limits of being an impartial spectator,

which means that, either by means of the public opinion or the 'internal man', the individual tries to reach his own **welfare...**" (and the social welfare, I should add, as social welfare benefits the individual welfare) (Adam Smith, in Campbell, 1988: 125).

PARTICIPATION

According to philosophical theory, even Aristotle supports the democratic ideals like, for instance, the **participation** which exists among equals in the **common search for the welfare of the whole society ...** (Campbell, 1988: 88)

In the 'polis', there is no significant division between public and private, in all aspects of the individual's life, from his education to the personal role which he plays at the social organic structure of the city-state. The individual welfare is, therefore, inseparable from that of the organisation, and the 'ethos' from the 'polis'. (Campbell, 1988: 82)

It is true that Aristotle thinks that there are, anyway, some arguments that favour the **democratic participation** of everybody in government. He admits that, in the moment in which each individual adds his wisdom to the decisory group, the final result is '**collective wisdom**', which can be superior to the one of the selected group. ... The main reason to oppose complete democracy is that the masses are too poor to share the time which the practice of government implies... (Campbell, 1988: 84).

Nowadays, political science aims at the same point. The opinions of Professor Lucas Verdú are here absolutely relevant: "I understand that **political participation is the active presence of the citizens and**

their groups at the institutions ... by means of the techniques and procedures of Constitutional Right, to determine the national political trend." (Lucas Verdú, 1973: 280)

He continues: **"A community with participation and without political opposition, is a community politically alienated..."** The level of welfare and technification must not separate or disinterest the citizens in participation... I consider that the political opposition process ... coincides, to a certain degree, with the question of political freedom, as responsible and efficient participation is understood." (Lucas Verdú 1973: 281).

The social theory, quoting professor Moya: "The socialist society is that in which one becomes self-conscious of her own social and individual determinations as well as self-conscious of her own historical necessity and reason, free for the construction of human history, and free for her own historical and social existence". (Moya, 1977: 257)

Until now, it had been thought, according to Linton (1969: 74) "sex and age was fundamental to determine the individual's participation in culture". Nowadays this is not so any more. Sex and age are not obstacles to participation in local political culture as well as participation in local political affairs, as it is shown with this case: Daimiel's Town Council.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE

The Daimiel Town Council was particularly sensitive to find a way to pay more attention to youth problems in the town. Their final solution was to create a youth town council capable of solving its own problems. To be aware of public affairs is an absolutely democratic and constitutional act, so Spain's Constitution Day (6th December) was chosen to put the idea into practice.

Through this experience, three goals would be achieved:

1. to increase the interest on young people's themes;
2. to prepare men and women to be politically active or participatory;
3. to implement and develop democracy and democratic participation.

Today's young people, the future adults, will have had the possibility of taking part in the local political, economic and social life. As a result, the new political culture that these young people will have, has nothing to do with their parents' political culture. They will have had the fortune of knowing the mechanisms of participation in local, political life.

Local public opinion, especially the parents of the chosen young people, received this initiative enthusiastically.

The idea consisted of creating a youth body which ran parallel to the local adult body.

If the adult town body had 17 councillors, 17 young people would be chosen as youth councillors.

The town council of Daimiel, formed of 10 members from PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español), 5 from PP (Partido Popular), 1 from IU (Izquierda Unida) and 1 from CDS (Centro Democrático Social), agreed to create a youth town council, with the same number of councillors for the different areas.

Daimiel has five public schools and one consolidated college. These six schools democratically chose their own representatives. Most of the young people's representatives turned out to be not older than 15 years.

At the first plenary, the young people's chairman of the body was chosen.

Once selected as youth council members, these young people can attend the meetings of the adult town council, where the councillor of the corresponding area has a voice and vote.

On 12th December 1992, the first youth plenary was constituted, where young people were the main characters of the play.

This formal plenary was recorded on video by trainee students from a radio-television course.

At this first plenary of the youth town council, a series of proposals were made. After one year, these local aims would be revised to see how many of them have been fulfilled.

According to Decree 1/1992, the areas covered by this youth town council are:

- Traffic
- Culture
- Education
- Drinkable water
- Industrial promotion
- Health and consumption
- Waterpipes and purification of residual water
- Welfare and ecology
- Sports
- Youth
- Cleaning
- Fairs
- Public works and urbanism
- Finance, Personal and Security, whose delegate councillors should fulfil the organic rules of the corporation.

The proposals resolved at this first plenary were:

- "1 Zones in the city centre, where young people can ride bikes, skates and skate-boards, etc;
- 2 Creation of a 'light' disco-pub, besides social works and playing zones;
- 3 An increase in children's competitions at Christmas and Fairs;
- 4 Installation of containers for glass, paper (for recycling);
- 5 Vigilance in parks and children's zones, for better urban security;
- 6 Conferences on alcoholism, drugs and life in a broad sense."

One year later, at a plenary on 18th December 1993, the degree of success was evaluated: (in their own words)

- "Spaces at the city centre and installations to practise sport, though restricted to football and basketball. (It is advisable to practise other equipment sports.)
- Children's competitions at Christmas and Fairs, resulting in a success at all the celebrated ones.
- It was attempted to open one 'light' disco, but it was a failure, as it was not accepted by the young people.
- Installation of containers for glass at several points at the city centre was obtained. Though the

number of containers was less than wished for, it has been possible to install paper containers to be recycled (they made their own posters and stickers for this campaign).

- New attractions for children in the park and in some other spaces of the city centre to substitute for the old ones; with greater access for possible users.
- More sports activities, like bike rides in springtime (they used bright and fluorescent colours on posters for the campaign).
- Solidarity with children of the third world (using stickers).
- We have seen how the groups of Scouts Castellano-Manchegos function, which has stimulated us to take the necessary steps to create some group of this character at Daimiel."

We have, they said, had the opportunity to express and fulfil our aspirations and preoccupations: to see how the town council functions internally. We have obtained, too, more attention to young people and to their proposals. We have participated at the solution of some problems of our village. What I mean is that this corporation is not merely symbolic, but something really active.

The new system of local youth participation has been commented on, on several occasions, in all the local and regional papers, and broadly commented on by local public opinion in a positive and favourable sense.

This experience shows that young people can lead and govern their own lives. They have been congratulated for the success obtained and have accepted their failures. All this might be a lesson for adults, who are supposed to be able to learn children's lessons.

What children do not know is that education and training policy plays a big role at the development and implementation of democratic participation.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- This actual case, Daimiel town, shows that children are capable of learning anything that they are taught.
- On seeing themselves as protagonists, being paid attention to, and considered as important, young people (and adults too) consider their participation more important.
- Their responsible and careful participation can obtain great modifications and improvements in town life.
- The urgent needs for their rights will be realised, taking into account a series of limitations of a formal or legal sense, that previously were unknown.
- The fact that some innovations are put into practice shows that, despite theory, these are not always well accepted by citizens.
- Through this moderate training, young people will become adult citizens who are much more responsible and trained than their parents were.
- This democratic and participatory town practice could initiate future political vocations and professions, which is a great advantage.
- This case study could serve as a model to be adopted in other towns or social institutions of a different nature.

DAIMIEL' S GENERAL AND STATISTICAL DATA

SITUATION:	North, N.E. of the province
EXTENSION:	43.933 has.
POPULATION:	17,000 inhabitants, approx.
ALTITUDE:	628 metres above sea level
CLIMATOLOGY:	extreme
DISTANCES:	to Madrid 169 km; to C. Real 30 km; to Toledo 125 km.
RAILWAYS:	links Ciudad Real to Alcazar de San Juan, and join the railway lines that go from Madrid to Extremadura and Andalucía.
ECONOMY:	preferably agricultural, with industries of agricultural transformation like wine, alcohol and olive-oil, textiles, buildings and furniture.
INCREASING INDUSTRIAL SECTORS:	Building and services.

Since 1973, Daimiel has a National Park: 'Las Tablas de Daimiel' (1,800 Has. at the confluence of the Ciguera river with the Guadiana).

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Students As Researchers

In April 1984, a series of case studies about truancy was published by the then Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE). The report **Student Perspectives on Truancy** was the culmination of research work undertaken by student research teams in eight Victorian schools during 1983.

I recall some resistance amongst adult educational authorities to the idea of employing students as paid researchers. After all, the Research Section of VISE had research staff with recognised credentials! What could education and community welfare possibly hope to learn from a series of case studies conducted by year 9 to 11 students? The answer was ... a lot.

VISE research staff provided training and support for 40 students in the eight schools. It was essential that student research teams produced a set of useable findings. The 'students as researchers' program had to be adequately resourced to minimise the risk of failure. And the Research Section of VISE was closely scrutinised. If the research project failed, we would have set back the credibility and development of youth participation and youth action programs in Victorian schools.

Research findings were presented and discussed by student teams at a one-day seminar (in September 1983) attended by senior representatives of Victorian Government departments and other organisations. That day provided clear evidence of the project's success. The case studies contained both qualitative and quantitative data about student patterns of involvement in truancy, the relationship between truant behaviours and youth crime, the centrality of school experiences in explanations of student resistance to schools, and the limitations of welfare-led responses to the educational problems that faced many students across various kinds of school communities. Representatives were impressed with the detail and complexity of student arguments about truancy. They heard student voices about an educational problem,

perhaps for the first time. They certainly heard perspectives that were not being canvassed around offices on Spring Street.

I will never forget the words of an Assistant Commissioner of the Victoria Police, who responded to the works of these 40 young people at the end of the seminar:

I have been in the police force for more than 30 years and during that time I have read a lot about juvenile delinquency and truancy. Today I have learned more from the excellent contributions of these student research teams than all those readings.

In the 1990s, the importance of young people and student initiated and owned research projects is no less significant than it was more than 10 years ago. We need to continually provide meaningful experiences for young people, that enable them to contribute, actively and competently, to institutional and community changes; this is absolutely necessary in these difficult economic and social times.

The challenge to hear younger voices is ever present. **Connect** has been a leading disseminator of alternative voices, voices that give information about what is possible and what is defensible action with regard to student participation and action. An even harder challenge is to enable young people to undertake the research, planning and implementation of institutional responses that could more realistically address their problems.

Those identified by schools as intractable, chronic truants did give legitimate voice to new ways of thinking about the problem and, therefore, give hope to those of us who advocate the empowerment of young Australians across all aspects of society and various social relations.

*Garry Coventry
School of Law and Legal Studies
LaTrobe University
Bundoora 3083*

Skippping School

Planning for the student research component of the truancy study commenced in the 1983 school year.

Negotiation with the contact teacher from each school (5 government, 2 independent and 1 catholic school) which participated in this component of the study took place during the first term of the 1983 school year and resulted in the contact teachers recruiting students for the research teams. Each student was asked to recruit a team of four to six Year 10 and/or Year 11 students. VISE research staff requested that each team include students who had a history of truancy and that the teams reflected mixed 'academic' abilities. (p 18)

Programs of this kind are purposively structured to initiate changes in the nature, processes and operation of school: features that are critical in attempts to address the problem of truancy... The evidence provided by this study identified the school as a critical component in the promotion of truant behaviour. Accordingly, it appears that school initiatives to address this behaviour should, at the very least, be grounded in alternations to everyday school practices, procedures and curriculum policies. (p. 131)

From: Skippping School: An examination of truancy in Victorian secondary schools (VISE, Melbourne, 1984)

**Quoted in
Connect No 31, February 1985**

Regional Association for Student-Centred Learning

RASCL

announces its third

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday 12th and Saturday 13th May, 1995

Venue:

Fremantle Education Centre
Cnr Cantonment and Parry Streets
Fremantle WA 6160

Student-Centred Learning, as a systematic approach to implementing such ideas into mainstream education, surfaced in Western Australia in 1991, and there has been a most encouraging groundswell of enthusiastic support. Thus, in 1993, the RASCL was born and held its first and very successful conference which drew 140 educators from all over the State. Again, in March 1994, it attracted educators and presenters from WA, England and the eastern states for its second conference.

The RASCL began with a few West Australian teachers who embraced the philosophy and methods of *Student-Centred Learning*. Many schools have held professional development days to discover about SCL and general interest in increasing rapidly. Bridgetown District High School has become committed to this whole-school concept and several other schools have core training groups. Hundreds of teachers are now integrating this approach in their classrooms. Books on the subject of SCL are available from the Fremantle Education Centre.

Don't be left behind! Come to this Conference and learn from the many and varied workshops that will be available.

Fee: \$130 per person - includes all workshops, synergy sessions, presentations, coffees and teas, lunch on both days, and dinner (with entertainment) on Friday evening at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle.

**For registration or further information,
please call Jon Pound at the Fremantle
Education Centre on (09) 335 5444 or
fax him on (09) 335 5656.**

(Mail address: PO Box 452,
Fremantle WA 6160)

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Celebrating Cultural Diversity

An Anthology of Writing by Girls from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

Australia is recognised internationally as being a peaceful and equitable country. These perceptions of our society have been attributed in part to exemplary Multicultural Policies.

Yet, how does this international perception compare with the perceptions of Australians and, in particular, adolescent Australians? How do the policies and practices that we implement in our schools and throughout our community affect the lives of adolescents, their hopes and dreams, and their thoughts about what Australia means to them today?

This book is a celebration of contemporary thoughts, feelings and attitudes of adolescent Australians from diverse cultural backgrounds, from Years 6-9 from Paralowie R-12 School, Burton R-7 School, Salisbury North 3-7 School and Salisbury High School (South Australia). Their writing is based on their unique experiences of migration and settlement and their hopes for their future in Australia.

The girls from Vietnamese, El Salvadorean, Cambodian, Polish, Chilean, Syrian, Afghanistani, Thai, Cantonese and Italian backgrounds provide us with a snapshot of their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as they write about their families, their homelands, their personal reflections about Australia, and their hopes for the future.

They also make social and political comment as they express thoughts and feelings about equality in education and careers, the effects of racism and our responsibilities in terms of the environment and world peace.

This project was initiated through the Supportive School Environment Project (Students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds) and has been made possible through grants from Carclew Youth Arts Centre and the Multicultural Education Coordinating Committee.

It is hoped that this work will be used as a primary resource to promote cultural inclusivity across the curriculum and as a vital reference for future planning. This book encapsulates what young women are feeling about things today, what their attitudes are, and where they believe Australia is heading in terms of cultural and linguistic inclusivity.

Melindy Bellotti
Coordinator

Supportive School Environment Project
(Students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds)

For copies of
Celebrating Cultural Diversity,
contact SA DECS.

Jackie Taylor, a Social Work student from the University of New South Wales is currently conducting research at the National Children's and Youth Law Centre on young people who have been suspended or expelled from Australian schools.

The NCYLC promotes and protects children and young persons rights by legal means. The Centre aims to bring about changes to laws, policies and practices through research, training and

Kicked Out of School ??

policy development in matters of children's rights. The Centre also promotes the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Australia.

Jackie's research topic is school suspensions, expulsions and exclusions. If you have experienced this, Jackie would like to speak to you. Please contact her at the Centre:

National Children's and
Youth Law Centre
c/- the University of
New South Wales
Sydney NSW 2052

Tel: (02) 398 7488
Fax: (02) 398 7416

STUDENTS IN NSW QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAMS

The South Coast Region's Department of School Education Quality Assurance reference group and review teams have recently invited members of the Regional Student Representative Council to be members of these panels.

Cindy Bailey of Albion Park High School is on the reference group and review team, and Sean Haynes of Smith's Hill High School is a member of the evaluation/review team. As participating members of Quality Assurance, Cindy attends regular meetings with Directors, Principals, ancillary staff, a Federation representative, and a Parent and Citizen representative, to discuss the progress of reviews by the Quality Assurance team. The Region has targeted School Development Days for review. During the review of School Development Days, Sean and Cindy interview randomly chosen students.

After the review, Sean said, "I am staggered at the different interpretations that students have about these days." Cindy commented, "It was disappointing that some students thought it was when teachers had tea and coffee."

Both students felt that, after the experience, there was a major role to be played by students in the quality assurance review process, especially if panels were to get reliable feedback from students. Students liked being interviewed by other students.

This is another step that the NSW South Coast Region is taking to have student input in decision making and curricular activities.

Students will deliver a paper on this process at the ACSA Curriculum '95 Conference in Melbourne this July.

PASTA READY

A Professional Association of SRC Teacher/Advisers (PASTA) was formed in Sydney during the weekend of February 11th-12th. The Association adopted the descriptive statement: "Promoting Student Participation, Leadership and Representation".

Initial membership of PASTA includes SRC school, regional and state support staff from throughout New South Wales. An eight person Steering Committee was appointed to develop a constitution, a newsletter, seek resources, make national and international contacts and publicise the Association.

To contact the PASTA Steering Committee, write to the Association, C/o Ralph Murray, SRC Publicity Coordinator, Level 5, Box 450, 20 George Street, Hornsby NSW 2077.

First Aboriginal SRC

The future of the state's Aboriginal youth is in good hands at one NSW metropolitan high school which is encouraging its Koori population to become community leaders.

Matraville High School in Metropolitan East Region is thought to be the first school in NSW to establish a fully Aboriginal student representative council to complement its original SRC.

The initiative will soon be adopted by Cleveland St High School and is expected to spread throughout the state.

The development of an Aboriginal Student Representative Council was encouraged by Aboriginal Development Officer Anthony Carter of Randwick City Council through the Metropolitan Indigenous Youth Advisory Council (MIYAC).

"Young Aboriginals today want to be more proactive in the decisions affecting the community," Mr Carter said.

"Unlike many of the older generation, they do not want to be associated with the bitterness of the past. They are only interested in finding their place in today's society."

Mr Carter said Matraville High School opened its doors earlier this year for a forum to be held to discuss the viability of setting up a fully Aboriginal student representative council.

"It was well received and during the forum, the school elected a body of 15 Aboriginal students to form

an Aboriginal council," he said. "The idea was to provide a mechanism for the students to advise the school on Aboriginal issues and to provide these young Aboriginal people with an opportunity to participate in decision making which affects their lives."

Mr Carter said young Aboriginals represented 70% of all Aboriginal people. "Yet there are few if any mechanisms in place for them to have their say," he said.

"MIYAC is a group which aims to encourage the positive development of Aboriginal youth. An Aboriginal Student Representative Council will help build the strengths of young Aboriginals through the development of skills, self-esteem and positive identities required to survive and succeed in life."

Matraville High School deputy Principal John Bedwell said both student representative councils contributed different things to the schools.

"The original SRC, which comprises Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, is primarily concerned with matters affecting the school. The Aboriginal SRC deals with matters specific to their culture and that relates more to things happening in the community. It's a great mix because the role of the SRC is to involve the community in schools and ours achieves that, while the Aboriginal SRC involves the students in the community," he explained.

Since the council was set up, it has been supported and guided by English/History Head Teacher

Stephanie Ingster, Aboriginal Studies Years 9-12 teacher Linda Christian and Aboriginal Education assistant Betty Stewart.

Mr Bedwell said school staff had noticed a marked change in the Aboriginal students.

"We've watched them grow and mature from their involvement in the council, especially the seniors who have taken it upon themselves to act as leaders for the younger Aboriginal student members," he said.

With funding from Randwick

City Council, the Aboriginal SRC has attended leadership courses through the Peer Support Foundation. Course coordinator Sue McGilvray said the courses are designed to develop skills in a style of leadership relevant to and effective in the local Aboriginal culture.

Students were encouraged to take on new areas of learning and responsibility through 'hands on' learning. Communication, decision-making, problem-solving and meeting procedures were areas of focus in

those courses. Mr Carter said he hoped to see Aboriginal; Student Representative Councils being established in schools throughout Australia. "They will provide a forum in which young Aboriginal people have the opportunity to develop organisational, decision-making and planning skills within a safe and supportive environment," he said.

Judy Wilkinson
from NSW School Education News
23 November 1994

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STUDENT PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

Kingsbury Primary School Magazine (Kingsbury PS, Vic) 1994

JSC Area Magazine (Preston/Reservoir JSC Network, Vic) Term 4, 1994

Chimera '94 (Mullauna SC, Vic) School Magazine, 1994

Celebrating Cultural Diversity (Paralowie R-12 Schools, Salisbury HS, Burton R-7 School and Salisbury North 3-7 School, SA) - an anthology of writing by girls of diverse cultural backgrounds.

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Australian:

Learning Tracks (Country Education Project, Vic) Issue No 8, Summer 1994

The 1994 RACV Energy Breakthrough (Country Education Project, Vic) Newsletter No 4, December '94

Youth Options (Youth Bureau, ACT) Nov 1994

Youth Issues Forum (YACVic, Fitzroy, Vic) Summer 1994

Education Links (Stanmore, NSW) No 49, Summer 1994/5

Network News (Surry Hills, NSW) Dec 1994

Young Australians: Making the Future Work (Social Justice Research Foundation, SA)

Other Ways (Alternative Education Resource Group, Vic) Issue 61, September 1994

Overseas:

Communication Research Trends (Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, St Louis, USA) Vol 14 No 3, 1994

Education Now (Nottingham, UK) No 6, Winter '95

AERO-Gramme (AERO, Roslyn Heights, NY, USA) #14, Winter 1994-5

National Coalition News (NCACS, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA) Vol 19 Nos 2, 3; Fall 1994, Winter 1995

A Deschooling Reader (Vancouver, Canada)

Documents

The documents listed in this column are of general background value. They are available on photocopy for research purposes. The length and cost (copying and postage) is listed. Please order by code number.

(A full computerised list of documents is now available for \$3; this can be accessed and organised by topic, key-word etc.)

Code Description/Pages/Cost

- | | |
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| 415 | NSW SRC State Conference Report 1994: Working As One. (55 pp; \$5.50) |
| 416 | NSW SRC Annual Report (5 pp; \$0.70) |
| 417 | NSW Regional SRC Reports at PASTA Conference (11-12 Feb 1995) (15 pp; \$1.50) |

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